

Message Text

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 10411

EXDIS

BELGRADE FOR US DEL CSCE; GENEVA FOR SEABED DEL - SLOSS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, UR, GW, US, CSCE
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER'S VISIT TO MOSCOW

REFS: (A) MOSCOW 8761; (B) NATO 5682; (C) BONN 10162;
(D) BONN 10119

SUMMARY: ON JUNE 21, I CALLED ON FOREIGN OFFICE STATE
SECRETARY VAN WELL FOR A BRIEFING ON FOREIGN MINISTER
GENSCHER'S TRIP (JUNE 10-13) TO THE SOVIET UNION.
AMONG THE TOPICS DISCUSSED WERE THE STATE OF
BREZHNEV'S HEALTH (IN FULL COMMAND BUT HE APPEARS TO
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HAVE AGED CONSIDERABLY), BREZHNEV'S BAFFLING REFERENCES
TO THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT (ADVISING THE GERMAN
SIDE NOT TO SEEK RENEGOTIATION OF THE QA), SOVIET
INTEREST IN ECONOMIC COOPERATION (ADVOCATING MORE
LONG TERM COMPENSATORY DEALS), BREZHNEV'S QUESTIONS
ON AND APPRAISAL OF PRESIDENT CARTER, AND SOVIET
ATTEMPTS TO PLAY UP DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND

THE FRG. END SUMMARY.

1. ON JUNE 21, I CALLED ON STATE SECRETARY VAN WELL FOR A BRIEFING ON FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER'S RECENT TRIP TO MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD. (VAN WELL ACCOMPANIED GENSCHER ON THE VISIT AND SAT IN ON THE GENSCHER/BREZHNEV TALKS.) IN MY OPENING REMARKS, I THANKED HIM FOR THE BRIEFINGS WE HAD ALREADY RECEIVED IN MOSCOW, BRUSSELS AND BONN (REFTELS) AND ASKED IF HE COULD ADD TO THESE EXCELLENT REPORTS. HIS BRIEFING TO ME COVERED THE FOLLOWING NEW OR INTERESTING POINTS:

-- BREZHNEV'S HEALTH: ALTHOUGH HE WAS OBVIOUSLY IN COMMAND OF THE CONVERSATION AND SEEMED TO REACT QUICKLY, BREZHNEV APPEARED TO HAVE AGED CONSIDERABLY. HE LOOKED LIKE A SHRUNKEN OLD MAN WITH WATERY EYES, PALE AND DEVOID OF SPARKLE. HIS SPEECH WAS SLOW. NEVERTHELESS, HE SEEMED JOVIAL AND IN GOOD SPIRITS MOST OF THE TIME, JOKING WITH THE PRESS, ETC.

-- BERLIN: BREZHNEV SAID HE UNDERSTOOD CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT WAS "INTERESTED, CONCERNED, AND SUFFERING" WITH REGARDS TO WEST BERLIN. HE ASKED GENSCHER TO CONVEY HIS HIGH REGARD FOR THE CHANCELLOR BUT THAT IN SPITE OF THAT HIGH REGARD, THE SOVIET UNION "WOULD NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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WITHDRAW FROM THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT." THE SOVIET SIDE COULD NOT ALLOW THE REPETITION OF CERTAIN THINGS HAPPENING TO UNDERMINE THE QA. ANY DISCUSSION CONCERNING A NEW AGREEMENT ON BERLIN, BREZHNEV ADVISED, WOULD BE UNFRUITFUL. THE TIME FOR A NEW AGREEMENT MAY COME SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE, BUT NOT NOW. GENSCHER, SOMEWHAT SURPRISED ACCORDING TO VAN WELL, RESPONDED THAT THE GERMAN SIDE WAS SIMILARLY ATTACHED TO THE PRESENT AGREEMENT AND HOPED NO ONE WAS CONSIDERING A RENEGOTIATION OF THE QA. UNDAUNTED, BREZHNEV RETURNED TO THE TOPIC OF THE QA AT LEAST TWICE DURING THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION, COUNSELING THE GERMANS TO "RE-THINK" THEIR POSITION SINCE UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, NO BETTER SOLUTION TO THE BERLIN PROBLEM THAN THE PRESENT QA WAS POSSIBLE. (COMMENT: VAN WELL SAID THE GERMAN SIDE WAS AND REMAINS BAFFLED BY BREZHNEV'S IMPLICATION THAT THE FRG WAS INTERESTED IN SCRAPPING THE QA IN FAVOR OF SOME NEW AGREEMENT. END COMMENT.)

-- MBFR: AS ALREADY REPORTED, BREZHNEV DREW HIS TALKING POINTS FROM TWO SETS OF BRIEFING PAPERS, ONE

WHICH HE CLAIMED TO HAVE "COLLECTED" FOR HIMSELF AND

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THE OTHER, CONSIDERABLY DIFFERENT IN TONE, PREPARED BY GROMYKO AND THE FOREIGN OFFICE. ACCORDING TO VAN WELL, BREZHNEV CLEARLY REFERRED FIRST TO HIS OWN NOTES IN DISCUSSING MBFR. BREZHNEV CLAIMED TO BE DISAPPOINTED WITH THE YEARS OF TALKS AND LITTLE PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN HALTING THE ARMS RACE. HE NOTED THAT THE FRG HAS SHOWN IT WANTS PROGRESS IN THE VIENNA TALKS, A SIGNAL HE REGARDS AS POSITIVE. RETURNING TO HIS OTHER SET OF BRIEFING PAPERS, BREZHNEV COVERED THE SAME GROUND, BUT THIS TIME ACCUSING THE FRG OF BLOCKING PROGRESS ON MBFR.

-- ECONOMIC COOPERATION: BREZHNEV MADE A STRONG APPEAL FOR FURTHER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE USSR AND
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THE FRG THROUGH LONG-TERM COMPENSATORY DEALS. HE SUGGESTED UPGRADING TALKS ON THESE MATTERS TO THE POLITICAL LEVEL IF THE TECHNICAL TALKS WERE UNABLE TO REACH TIMELY AND SATISFACTORY SOLUTIONS.

--SOVIET/GERMAN WORKING GROUPS: I ASKED VAN WELL ABOUT PRESS REFERENCES TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT WORKING GROUPS ON TOPICS SUCH AS DISARMAMENT. VAN WELL ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD MADE SUGGESTIONS ALONG THESE LINES, BUT THAT THE FRG HAD DECLINED SUCH AN AMBITIOUS PROJECT. INSTEAD, GENSCHER AGREED ONLY TO SPECIAL CONSULTATIONS ON SPECIFIC TOPICS SUCH AS DISARMAMENT AND OTHER UN-RELATED ISSUES. AS THE FIRST STEP, TALKS ARE SCHEDULED IN GENEVA ON CCD AND DISARMAMENT AT THE END OF JUNE (PROBABLY JUNE 28). VAN WELL MENTIONED THAT IN SEPTEMBER, THERE MAY BE TALKS ON THE FRG-SPONSORED RESOLUTION ON THE TAKING OF HOSTAGES IN THE UN AS WELL AS ON LOS.

--BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO BONN: NO DATE HAS YET BEEN SET FOR BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO BONN. AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE WAS REACHED, HOWEVER, THAT THE VISIT WOULD TAKE PLACE THIS YEAR, PROBABLY IN LATE AUTUMN. LATE AUTUMN WAS DEFINED AS ANY TIME BEFORE DECEMBER 20. VAN WELL BELIEVES BREZHNEV WILL ARRIVE IN LATE NOVEMBER OR EARLY DECEMBER.

-- PENDING USSR/FRG TREATIES: VAN WELL TOLD ME THAT GENSCHER DID NOT DISCUSS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE THREE OUTSTANDING TREATIES: THE SCIENTIFIC-TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT, THE CULTURAL PROTOCOL AGREEMENT AND THE LEGAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT, WHICH HAVE BEEN BLOCKED BY LACK OF AGREEMENT ON A BERLIN
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CLAUSE. NOT WISHING TO ALLOW HIS MOSCOW TALKS TO BECOME BOGGED DOWN IN THIS FAMILIAR QUAGMIRE, GENSCHER AGREED WITH GROMYKO THAT THE TALKS BE CONTINUED ON THE VICE-MINISTER AND WORKING LEVELS. GENSCHER'S COMMITMENT TO A SATISFACTORY BERLIN CLAUSE REMAINS UNCHANGED. IF NECESSARY, THE FRG WOULD CONTINUE TO LIVE WITHOUT THE AGREEMENTS, BUT GENSCHER WANTED TO INDICATE, AT LEAST, THE OPENNESS AND WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE OF THE FRG SIDE.

-- SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PRESS: VAN WELL

CONFIDED (ASKING THAT THE INFORMATION BE TIGHTLY HELD)
THAT THE PRESS CORPS ACCOMPANYING GENSCHER HAD
INCLUDED TWO JOURNALISTS PREVIOUSLY "THROWN OUT"
OF THE GDR, LOEWE AND MATKE. MATKE RECEIVED HIS VISA
WITH NO DIFFICULTY AND LOEWE GOT HIS AFTER A SHORT
DELAY AND A LITTLE PROMPTING.

-- YOUNGER SOVIET LEADERS: I ASKED VAN WELL ABOUT
REPORTS I HAD SEEN ALLUDING TO CONTACTS THE GERMAN
SIDE HAD WITH A NEW SET OF "TOUGH" YOUNG OFFICIALS
(REF. B). HE AGREED THAT A NEW GENERATION WAS IN
EVIDENCE WHICH SEEMED MUCH MORE ASSERTIVE AND HARD-
LINE, SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING KVITSINSKIY AND VORONTSOV IN THE MFA.

--NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE: VAN WELL DESCRIBED
GROMYKO AS ACUTELY INTERESTED IN THE RESULTS OF CIEC.
GENSCHER ENCOURAGED SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN THE
NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, SAYING THAT TERMS OF SOCIALIST
PARTICIPATION REMAINED OPEN FOR DISCUSSION. GROMYKO
APPARENTLY FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE, IN SPITE OF
GENSCHER'S ASSURANCES TO THE CONTRARY, THAT THE TERMS

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OF SOCIALIST COUNTRY PARTICIPATION HAD NOT BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A SECRET UNDERSTANDING REACHED AT THE LONDON SUMMIT.

2. VAN WELL SAID

GENSCHER HAD SPECIFICALLY ASKED HIM TO TELL ME ABOUT WHAT GENSCHER PERCEIVED TO BE SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO PLAY UP DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE FRG. BREZHNEV HAD MENTIONED TO GENSCHER THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER THIS YEAR COULD NOT BE EXCLUDED. EVERYTHING, HE SAID, DEPENDED ON THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF A NEW SALT AGREEMENT. HE CLAIMED THAT THE NEW PRESIDENT WAS CURRENTLY BEING STRONGLY CRITICIZED FOR SENDING SECRETARY VANCE TO MOSCOW WITH A PACKAGE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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UNACCEPTABLE PROPOSALS, FORCING VANCE TO RETURN EMPTY HANDED. THIS CONFIRMED, IN BREZHNEV'S VIEW, REPORTS HE HAD HEARD THAT PRESIDENT CARTER DID NOT LACK CERTAIN "QUALITIES" BUT THAT HE HAD TO BE "EDUCATED" TO SEE HIS MISTAKES. BREZHNEV CONTINUED THAT IT WAS WELL KNOWN THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND PRESIDENT CARTER DID NOT AGREE ON SEVERAL IMPORTANT MATTERS. GENSCHER, VAN WELL SAID, PICKED UP THE GAUNTLET, REPLYING THAT IT WAS BREZHNEV WHO MIGHT HIMSELF. HAVE BEEN MISLED IN THIS REGARD BY A FEW REPORTS IN THE PRESS (WHICH HE HAD PREVIOUSLY CRITICIZED FOR MISLEADING THE WESTERN PUBLIC THROUGH ANTI-SOVIET TENDENCIES). THE DISCUSSIONS AND AGREEMENTS AT THE LONDON SUMMIT, GENSCHER ASSERTED, SHOWED CLEARLY THAT THERE WAS FULL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CHANCELLOR AND THE PRESIDENT. AT ANOTHER POINT IN THE DISCUSSION, BREZHNEV ASKED IF GENSCHER HAD MET PRESIDENT CARTER AND, IF SO, WHAT HIS EVALUATION WAS. ACCORDING TO VAN WELL, GENSCHER REPLIED HE HAD MET THE PRESIDENT TWICE AND EACH TIME CARTER IMPRESSED HIM AS A SERIOUS STATESMAN, AS WELL AS A STRONG AND VIGOROUS PRESIDENT.

3. SUMMING UP, VAN WELL CHARACTERIZED THE RESULTS OF THE TALKS AS MOSTLY ATMOSPHERICS. GENSCHER, HIMSELF, WAS TREATED WITH "EXTRAORDINARY RESPECT"; THIS SERVED TO EASE TENSIONS CAUSED BY PERCEPTIONS OF GENSCHER AS A "HARD LINER" VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIETS. THE TRIP WENT WELL BUT ANY REAL SUBSTANCE WOULD HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL BREZHNEV GOT TOGETHER WITH SCHMIDT. STOESSEL

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